

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested in view of the following remarks. Prior to entry of this response, Claims 1-25 were pending in the application, of which Claims 1, 10, and 15 are independent. In the Final Office Action dated May 6, 2005, Claims 1-25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Following this response, Claims 1-3, 9, and 26-33 remain in this application with Claims 4-8 and 10-25 being canceled without prejudice or disclaimer and Claims 26-33 being added by this Amendment. Applicants hereby address the Examiner's rejections in turn.

I. Rejection of the Claims Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

In the Final Office Action dated May 6, 2005, the Examiner rejected Claims 1, 4-6, 10, and 15-16 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,477,504 ("*Hamlin*") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,622,175 ("*Piller*") further in view of U.S. Patent Publication No. 2003/0069874 ("*Hertzog*"). In the Final Office Action, the Examiner stated that the inclusion of the language of Claim 8 and all intervening claims into independent Claim 1 might make independent Claim 1 allowable. (See Final Office Action, page 24, lines 1-2.) Per the Examiner's suggestion, Claim 1 has been amended to include the subject matter of Claims 4-8 and Applicants respectfully submit that the amendment overcomes this rejection and adds no new matter. Claims 4-8 and 10-25 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claim 9 has been amended to place it in better form for consideration and no new matter has been added to Claim 9. Accordingly, independent Claim 1 patentably distinguishes the present invention over the cited art, and Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection of Claim 1.

Dependent Claims 2-3 and 9 are also allowable at least for the reasons described above regarding independent Claim 1, and by virtue of their dependency upon independent Claim 1. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection of dependent Claims 2-3 and 9.

II. New Claims

Claims 26-33 have been added to more distinctly define and to round out the protection for the invention to which Applicants are entitled. Applicants respectfully submit that these claims are allowable over the cited art and that they add no new matter.

III. Conclusion

Applicants respectfully request that this Amendment After Final be entered by the Examiner, placing the claims in condition for allowance. Applicants respectfully submit that the proposed amendments of the claims do not raise new issues or necessitate the undertaking of any additional search of the art by the Examiner, since all of the elements and their relationships claimed were either earlier claimed or inherent in the claims as examined. Therefore, this Amendment should allow for immediate action by the Examiner.

Finally, Applicants respectfully submit that the entry of the Amendment would place the application in better form for appeal, should the Examiner dispute the patentability of the pending claims.

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that the claimed invention, as amended, is neither anticipated nor rendered obvious in view of the prior

art references cited against this application. Applicants therefore request the entry of this Amendment, the Examiner's reconsideration and reexamination of the application, and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

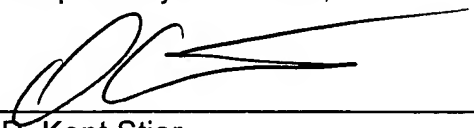
In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims, as amended, are patentable over the cited references. The preceding arguments are based only on the arguments in the Official Action, and therefore do not address patentable aspects of the invention that were not addressed by the Examiner in the Official Action. The claims may include other elements that are not shown, taught, or suggested by the cited art. Accordingly, the preceding argument in favor of patentability is advanced without prejudice to other bases of patentability. Furthermore, the Final Office Action contains a number of statements reflecting characterizations of the related art and the claims. Regardless of whether any such statement is identified herein, Applicants decline to automatically subscribe to any statement or characterization in the Final Office Action.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this amendment and charge any additional required fees to our Deposit Account No. 13-2725.

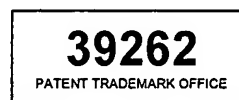
Respectfully submitted,

Dated: September 6, 2005

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